

The Argument vpon the Epistle of S. Paule to Philemon: by Erasmus of Roterodame.



His Philemon (after the Greekes writing) was a Phrygia
boyne, whiche nation of people is vnteachable & clauethe,
as the Greekes owne proverbe maketh often mention:
Stripes make the Phrygian to amende. And yet Paul
recomendeth this Philemon one of hys speciall frendes, by
cause of his godlynes & diligence done to y^e sayntes. And a
seruaunt of his one Onesimus had runne away fro him
to Rome, and had theuishlye stolen somewhat from him,
as seruauntes are for the moste parte vsed to doe. There whan he had hearde
Paule, who at that tyme was in bondes, he receiued the doctrine of the gospel,
and serued Paule in prison. But lest the maister should be vexed in his mynde
for hys seruantes runnyng away, he sendeth him home agayne, & with
a wonderfull diligence and civilltie, he reconcileth vnto the Maister
his seruaunt that had bene both, a runnagate and a piket, and
offereth him selfe to be swetty to make good what soeuer he
had piket at his runnyng away. This Epistle he
wrote from the prison by the sayd Onesimus
whom he also calleth
his sonne.

Thus endeth the Argument.

The paraphrase of Erasmus

byon the Epistle of S. Paule to Philemon.

The i. Chapter.

Paule the p[er]sonet of Christe & brother Timothee. Vnto Philemon the beloued, and ouer helper, and to the beloued Appia, and to Archippus ouer to loue souler, and to the congregation that is of thy house. Grace be vnto you and peace from God ouer father, & from the Lord Iesus Christe.

The text



Phile becoze this tyme an Apostle and seruante of Iesu Christ and nowe his p[er]sonet also: for why shoulde not I be glad to be hys p[er]sonet, for whose ghospelles sake I weare these bondes: not for the punishment of any cruell that I haue done, but as a notable badg of a free & valiant preacher: and also my felowe ghospellpreacher, brother Timothee, vnto Philemon in the profession of the common faith a brother, singularly worthy to be beloued: and not a brother onely but also my companion in very many affaires & partaker in the office of the gospel: & to his wyfe Appia, my moste welbeloued syster as concerning the kyndred of sayth: & to Archippus our felowe souler and to the rest of the congregation whiche is at his house: Grace be vnto you and peace from God ouer comune father & fro his sonne the lord Iesu Christ.

I thanke my god, making mencio alwayes of the in my prayers, when I heare of thy loue and sayth, whiche thou haste towards the Lord Iesu, and towards all sayntes, so that the fellowshipp of thy sayth is fruitful in the knowledge of euery good (woorde) whiche is in you tow arde Iesus Christe. For we haue great ioye and consolacion in thy loue: because that by thee (brother) the sayntes heres are comforted.

The text

In my prayers wherewith I am accustomed to sacrifice daylye vnto God, I render thanks vnto him alwayes on thy behalfe. For I ascribe it thankfully vnto him, that I heare spoken openly of all men, that is to say, both the purenesse, & thy ryght gospelling charitie, which I bearest towards the lord Iesus & not towards hym only, but also towards all sayntes. I is to wete, his meembres vnto who what so euer is bestowed, hys wyl is to recke it done to him self. And this I also beseeche him, to augment his mercifulnes vpon thee, & that this thy faith, whiche is not idle in the, may expresse his power dayly more & more, & to enforce the with p[re]ciousnes to releue me & me, so I there be no office of christi- an charitie but that thou maye be both acquainted and tried in it. The thynges that thou hast hitherto done already, occasion vs to conceaue a more sure confidence in thee, that we dare be bolde to reckon vpon the in matters of greater weyght. For when I doe consider that all that Christians haue are comune, I am not a litle ioyous, and euen in these afflictions it was no smal comforte to me, that thou (o my brother) wast so ready to desertie well of al men, by meanes of thy loue, wherewith thou haste refreshed the sayntes heartes that are afflicted with the sorowes of this worlde. For in this thy doing thou declarest thy selfe to be a ryght brother.

Wherfore, though I myght be bolde in Christ to commaunde thee, that whiche was thy duty to do: yet for loues sake I rather beseeche the, though I be as I am, even olde Paul, and now a prisoner of Iesu Christ. I beseeche the for my sonne Onesimus whom I haue begotten in my bondes (whiche in tyme passed was to the supposable but now profitable both to the and to me) whom I haue sent home agayne. Whou therefore receiue him, that is to say, myne owne bowels, whom I woulde fayne haue receyued w

The text

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the Epistle

me, that in thy grade beinght haue ministred vnto me in the bondes of the gospell. Therefore, without thy mynde woulde I haue nothing, that the good which thou doest should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

Wherefore hauing the experience of these so many matters, whereby thou declarest thy selfe to be a true follower of Christ, I trusted exceedingly, that I might obtayne of the what I wyl, albeit I commaunded the only, as the father his sonne, and as an Apostle his disciple, namely in a matter of it selfe indifferent and agreeable to the gospelles doctrine, that thou professest: whiche commaundeth, that we by experience felvyng the mercye of the Lorde in forgyuynge our debte, shoulde lykewylse forgyue other, yet I had rather to obtayne this at thyne handes by charitie, than by myne authoritie: and I woulde rather desire the, as one brother desireth another, than commaunde the as a master his scholar. And thou shalt not disoayne suche a desyrou. For in what thyng canst thou save me nape that I desyre therea even I, fyrst Paule (whan I speake of Paule, I meane matters vnto the that are not small) than an olde man. And muche is wonte to be graunted to a man for his age sake. But this geate is no nouelties to thee. And nowe also a prysoner. And in making of desyres even the miserie of the beseker hath no small weight. Last of al, I am the prysoner of Christe Iesu. And to suche a prysoner all ought to beare their fauour that professe the doctrine of Christe. To a man that desyreth by so many wayes thou couldest not save nay, althoughe he shoulde entreate the for any man. But nowe I entreate thee for my sonne, whom I loue so muche the more tenderly, that I begate him not vnto Moses, but vnto Christ, not to the world but to the gospell: yea and I begate hym in my bondes nowe whan I shall shortly goe out of this wayle. For parentes are wonte to loue their chyldren more inwyllyngly, whom they begate in their extreme olde age. This is euen Onesimus, that in tymes past whan he had robbed his master runne awaye frome hym, litell agreeably to hys owne name, that is to wete, profytable and trustie, nowe is cleane chaunged into an other sort, and shal not only be trusty for thy profyte hereafter, but also he was profytable to me wylh hys seruyce in prysoun. Therefore I sende him to the home agayne, for nowe he is become an other man. And yf thou be the man, that I trust thou art: and yf olde Paule the prysoners commendacion standeth of any effecte with the, thou shalt receyue Onesimus, not nowe as a runneagate seruauant, but as the thynges that I set most store by, and my singularly welbeloued sonne. It is agaynst my wyl that I sende him home agayne. For I had rather kepe him still with me, if it were but for this cause, that he should represent thee vnto me in these bondes. For I doubt not, but inasmuche as thou shewest so muche charitie towards all others for the gospelles sake, thou woldest in case thou were here, ministrate also to me in these bondes, wherewith I am tryed for the gospelles sake. But nowe he is founde vnought for, by whom thou mayest ministrate vnto me being absent thy selfe. Howbeit I woulde do nothing without thyne aduise, lest yf in vsing myne authoritie I shoulde do it vpon myne owne head, althoughe thou wouldest haue taken my dede in good parte, yet thy well doinge shoulde haue the lesse commendacion, yf it seemed to be toynded with any necessity. Now I sent him home agayne, so as it maye be in thy choysse eyther to kepe hym still with the, or to sende him to me agayne. Yf thou sende him agayne, thy doinges shall haue so muche the more prayse, in that it is not enforced but freely done

and

and of thine owne mynde:

For happily he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst see him for ever, not now as a seruant: but about a seruant, euen a brother beloved, specially to me: but how much more unto the, both in flesh, & also in spirit: if I coulde see thee for a season, because hym as my selfe. If he haue done the any hurt, or oweth the oughte, I laye to my charge, (I Paul haue writtē it with mine owne hand) I wyl recompence it. So I do not say to the, how I thou owest unto me euen thine owne selfe also. But so (brother) let me enjoy the in I lord. Comfort my home in the lord. Trusting in thy obedience, I went unto the, knowing I thou wylt also do more than I say. Moreover, prepare me lodging: for I trust I thorow the helpe of your prayes, I shalbe geynt unto you. Ther salute the, Epaphras my felowe prisoner in Christ: Titus, Artemas, Demas, Lucas, my helpers. The grace of our Lord Iesu Christ be with you spirituellie. Amen.

The text:

Do not thinke vpon his running away. He hath recompensed the fault of his fleeing with his wel doynge, he hath washed it away by baptisme, he hath done it away w teares. And how woorest I whether it come so to passe by I dispensation of Gods prouidence, I his fault might turne to good both to vs & to him? The iudgements of god be secret. Whereby he was for this purpose taken away fro thee for a season, I for a seruant being but for a season (for bonde seruants endure the no longer than for terme of lyfe) thou mightest receiue him for euer. It is for euer whatsoeuer the gospel bringeth forth, & that I should receiue him againe now not as a bond seruant but as a most deere brother. Truly vnto me that am an Apostle, he is bothe a brother and most dearely beloved brother, for the commune faithes sake, which maketh vs like in Christ: for the commune enheritaunce sake, wherunto we are called indifferently like: for the commune fathers sake, for the commune redemers sake, in whiche all there is no difference betwene the lord and the seruant, betwene the maister and the scholar. And yf he for these causes be vnto me most dearely beloved, w whom I haue nothyng commune sauing the kyndred of the spirit, how much more ought he to be most dearely beloved vnto the, vnto whom besides the bondes of the spirit, he is also ioyned after I flesh. Then wouldest thoue a stranger, if thou seest him become suche a one as Onesimus is. But nowe thou haite loue him for this respecte that where he is of thine owne household, he is proued suche a one as he is. And yf thou vouchesafe to haue me to be thy companion in the gospels affaires, thou must take him agayne as it were I my selfe. For I loue him as my most deare soune, as my highly beloved brother, & as partaker of my bondes and of the gospell. Other thou must cast of both or heertly loue both. What he hath bene afore tyme, it becometh not to reherse after he is baptised. Suppose him to be a newe man newly bozne agayne vnto the. But if the losse of any thing greue the, wherof thou wouldest haue amends, before thou forgeue hym take me suretye for him. Requyre it of me, whatsoeuer he hath either hurt thee or oweth thee. I bryde my fidelitie vnto the by this my hande writynge. Doe thou haue this Epistle written with my bette owne hande. Yf thou thinke me a trustye suretye, leaue Onesimus alone, goe to lawe with me, I shal paye the agayne in his behalfe, whatsoeuer he oweth the. Thus muche I coulde obteyne (I thinke) yf I had to do with any other man. I am not disposed to reherse at this present, what I might iustly requyre of the by myne owne autoritie. For I wyl not make rehersall here, that inasmuch as thou arte become a christian man by my doctrine, thou owest me not only that that thyne is, but also thine owne selfe. Muche lesse wrong thou oughtest to

rechen it

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rechen it, yf I woulde requite the to forgyue me, what soeuer losse it be that Onesimus oweth thee, howbeit I desyre not that, oules thou wilt wyllyngly and of thyne owne mynde forgyue it, not so muche to set my promise at libertie, as that thou shouldest declare thy charitie. Wel goe to my brother Onesimus hath his name of fructon, who, lyke as I loue hym delye, and as I woulde with al myne hert haue hym praysed vnto the, so let it be my chaunce to haue s fructon of thee, not after the maner as among the commune people, a frend is glad of his frende, but so as an Apostle is ioyous of his disciple that expresth the doctrine of Christ. Thou seest how hartely I loue Onesimus, and he hath wel deserved that I should loue him. Therfore receyue hym, & make my heart merry. Herin I trouble the with to muche a doe, not that I put any distrust in thy charitie, but I do it vpon a certaine abundaunce of loue that I beare vnto my soune. For in dede, I knowe thyne obedience so throughe well by thyne olde diligent doinges, that I doubt not but thou wilt doe moze in this behalf than I requite of the. And in the meane whyle receyue Onesimus gentlie euē as my pledge, and also prepare me lodgyng agaynst I come, whiche shall not be long after. For I trust that God throughe your prayers wil once restore me agayne vnto you. And then I shall presently thanke the for thy gentill receyuyng of Onesimus. Epaphras the countreyman, saluteth thee, whiche is my felow in prison and in bondes, for Christ Iesus sake. Adoniet Marcus Aristarchus, Demas, & Lucas, my felowes in office, And imagine that they all beseeche the for Onesimus as I doe.

The grace of oure Lorde Iesus Christ be alwayes
wyth your spirite: Amen.

Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the
Epistle to Philemon.